Streamlining of passport issue procedure

2446. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passports issued in the country in the year 2003-04;

(b) the number of passports issued in the year 2003-04 in different cities, giving the respective number of passports issued and the names of the cities where the offices were based;

(c) whether Government are aware that ordinary people are being harassed and heckled at most regional passport offices; and

(d) in what manner Government propose to streamline the issuance of passports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) The number of passports issued were 29,55,529 in 2003 and 15,10,832 in 2004 (January-June) by the 30 Passport Offices in India. The Statement giving passport office-wise information on issuance of passports is enclosed. (*See* below).

(c) There are occasional reports of some harassment of passport applicants. Necessary instructions are sent to Passport Offices to look into such cases and take necessary measures to address the public grievances immediately. All Passport Offices have public grievance redressal mechanism at the level of Passport Officers. The Central Passport Organisation headquarters has a separate Public Grievance Cell directly under the Chief Passport Officer which is monitored regularly.

(d) The simplification and streamlining of passport issuance system is a continuous process. A Committee was constituted by the Government in March 2001 to review the Passport Issue System. The Committee submitted its report in September 2001 and made several recommendations for simplification of procedures, decentralization of the submission of passport applications to the district level through the establishment of District Passport Cells, and modernization of Passport Offices. Most of the recommendations made by the Committee have been implemented.

Statement

The number of passports issued in Passport Offices in 2003 and 2004

Sl. No.	Name of RPO/PO	Number of Passports issued in 2003	Number of Passports issued during Jan.-June 2004
1	2	3	4
1.	Ahmedabad	256289	112248
2.	Bangalore	152986	79624
3.	Bareilly	31882	20009
4	Bhopal	38269	20729
5.	Bhubaneswar	17071	9457
6	Chandigarh	170104	88538
7.	Chennai	202657	109045
8.	Cochin	154409	81450
9.	Delhi	152013	89073
10.	Ghaziabad	33625	21673
11.	Guwahati	16479	8315
12.	Hyderabad	257850	146864
13.	Jaipur	96400	54865
14.	Jalandhar	161884	79190
15.	Jammu	8672	5445
16.	Kolkata	96851	57790
17.	Kozhikode	189555	100977
18.	Lucknow	120775	62828
19.	Mumbai	187222	99686
20.	Nagpur	20038	11599
21.	Panaji	26918	12514
22.	Patna	31119	22477
23.	Pune	50469	29341

1	2	3	4
24.	Ranchi	10210	7135
25.	Srinagar	10080	5164
26.	Surat	7165	21862
27.	Thane	74382	39008
28.	Trichy	217300	132780
29	Trivandrum	112509	61173
30	Vishakhapatnam	50346	32221
	TOTAL	2955529	1510832

Official policy to deal with hostage situation

2447. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have in place any set official policy to deal with the hostage situation by domestic and foreign terrorists;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether there is any proposal to formulate basic guidelines to deal the cases of hostages which of late, have started increasing and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (d) It is the policy of the Government of India not to compromise with terrorist groups or elements. However, while adhering to this principle, the objective of the Government is to ensure the safety and well-being of all its citizens, whether in India or abroad. In case of hostage-taking, Governments makes all efforts possible to secure the early and safe release of its nationals In order to deal with hostage situations, the Government has an institutionalised mechanism in place. There is a crisis management group which is set up immediately and is tasked with the constant monitoring and handling of the situation in close consultation with concerned agencies, our diplomatic missions abroad and with foreign governments. The Cabinet Secretary also holds a parallel set of inter-ministerial meetings, as required, to take appropriate decisions. The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs may